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## Social Capital Influences Upon Internet Usage of Rural Guatemalan English Teachers

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*(Editor's note: See full text for reference citations.)*

From 1960 to 1996, a civil war was waged in the mountain highlands and jungles of the Republic of Guatemala. Difficulties imposed by the war upon transportation and communication disrupted the development of information communication technology (ICT) infrastructures in remote areas, and of knowledge and practices for the use of ICT in education. This produced a digital divide between metropolitan and rural regions. The 1996 Esquip-

ulas Peace Accords and subsequent agreements demonstrated a commitment by the Guatemalan government to support equal educational opportunities for its indigenous peoples.

The ICT project was initiated in July 2007. At that time, and by invitation of the education director of the FRMT [Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum], comprised of 34 teachers who had participated in a teacher training program at the FRMT's school and led by the researcher, were offered free usage of the Internet to participate in follow-up training online with the researcher in a 26-week course. Of the 34, only

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This article is excerpted from *Educational Media and Technology Yearbook 37*, published this year. Read the full text by logging in at the AECT website, <http://aect.org/>, and clicking on Publications.

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Check out calls for papers, proposals, and participants. Get involved.

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### JOURNALS

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### RESEARCH

The topic this month is learning designers as innovation officers.

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## Calls for Papers, Proposals, and Participants

**Call for Proposals.** Need funding to develop a research proposal? Consider applying for a Collaborative Research Grant. The purpose of the grant is to provide monetary support to enable association members to develop research project proposals that include active collaboration among researchers, research institutions, and AECT. Information at: <http://aect.org/>.

**Call for Papers.** The AECT flagship practitioner journal, *TechTrends*, is seeking manuscript submissions, including from international and newer authors. For more information, see the Instructions for Authors online: <http://aect.site-ym.com/?page=techtrends>. AECT's premier research journal, *Educational Technology Research and Development* welcomes submissions: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/etrd>.

**Call to Converse.** Participate in online discussions through the AECT website in ITForum. Join in and read what others are saying and contribute your own thoughts. ITForum is reached from the AECT homepage: <http://aect.org/>.

**Call for Manuscripts.** AECT, in collaboration with Springer, has announced a new series of

books and monographs under the title, “Educational Communications and Technology: Issues and Innovations.”

The purpose of the series is to extend AECT's ongoing publications with Springer and to offer the Springer Briefs innovative format to AECT authors and contributors. For more information potential authors are asked to see: <http://aect.org/>.

*Deadline: October 1*

**Call for Proposals.** The 5th Biennial Research Symposium will be held next summer. Similarly, the second International Research Symposium also will be held next summer. The inaugural international symposium was held in Taiwan last June. Proposals are invited for both symposia, which offer opportunities for information sharing that is vital to the growth of research knowledge.

For more information or to submit a proposal, or if you have any questions, please contact:

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## Virtually Forgotten: Special Education Students in Cyber Schools

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According to the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, iNACOL, an estimated 250,000 students are enrolled in full-time online education. Due to the recent boom in digital education, there is a lag in research relating to cyber schools. One component of this educational area that has received almost no attention is special needs learners who are enrolled in online education. This article seeks to provide valuable insight in describing the population of cyber school students with disabilities, evaluating their inclusion in the cyber environment, and assessing their learning outcomes.

Online learning can be difficult for regular education students, let alone students with disabilities, so focus needs to be given on how designers, teachers, and administrators are creating and adapting curriculum in order to meet diverse needs of students. This means that instructors will need to keep in mind that they may have to make accommodations for learners in their courses based on individual needs. The research in this study shows that students with a wide range of disabilities enrolled in online programs.

This study looks to set the stage for future research by recognizing the large population of students with learning disabilities in online education. Populations in Pennsylvania cyber schools almost mirror that of state averages of special education students. This calls for greater research to investigate this growing trend as growth of special education students is exceeding that of general education in cyber schools.

The primary focus of research has been on policies rather than that of learner outcomes. With this in mind schools, administrators, and developers all need to be aware of the potential interaction that these learners will have with their courses. Although online education may not be appropriate or the best solution for all learners, in public education, all students must be accepted. Having the ability to modify curriculum and make special adaptations for these learners is just a component that needs to be considered as a best practice, but has potential legal ramifications if schools fail to meet the needs of these learners.

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#### **AECT Mission**

The mission of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology is to provide international leadership by promoting scholarship and best practices in the creation, use, and management of technologies for effective teaching and learning in a wide range of settings.

#### **Goals:**

- Define the disciplines and professional activities that comprise the field of educational communications and technology.
- Serve and represent professionals in the field and support professional growth.
- Advance scholarship and practice that contribute to and enlarge the knowledge base of the field.
- Promote policies that ensure the humane and ethical use of educational communications and technology at all levels, from the personal through the international.

### **Social Capital...continued from page 1**

19 elected to try out free online access, and only 5 of them completed the course. This perplexed the FRMT education staff, local Ministry of Education leadership, and the researcher. In reaction to a comment that perhaps the nonparticipating teachers lacked motivation, the FRMT agreed to support the researcher in the role of facilitating a study to shed light on challenges and potential resolutions to teacher rejection of the Internet.



After completion of just a few of the interviews, it became apparent that low responsiveness of teachers to the offer of free Internet usage was not due to a simple lack of motivation, as had been asserted. Specifically, the study advanced the cause of social justice for an underserved rural teacher population in a developing nation, by demonstrating:

1. Indicators for improving Internet availability per location and hours of access.
2. Community recommendations about how to develop new skills, habits, and priorities for online education.
3. Levels of interest for creation of specialized online coursework matching the community's needs.
4. Needs to address a general scarcity of resources to overcome challenges of buying power, infrastructure, and distance for gaining access to Internet hardware, connections, and training.

Local comments pointed up the essentiality of a cooperative agreement between private and public entities to coordinate pay scales, work schedules, and proximity of Internet services, so that all teachers of the region might benefit from equal opportunities for professional advancement with the Internet as a prime tool in the process. The potential integration of efforts between these entities represents a fusion of local bonding and bridging social capital sources and external, linking social capital. Most importantly, this study has brought to fruition findings based on an analysis of social capital forces which directly affect teacher decisions to study online, dispelling baseless assertions about their unresponsiveness.

*Editor's note:* As is the case with any excerpt, this one omits much that will be of interest. Readers therefore are urged to access the full text of this thoughtful study.

## New Research Handbook Is Hot Off the Press

The fourth edition of AECT's *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*



has now been published. The new volume succeeds the third edition, published in 2007.

The new edition weighs in at more than seven pounds and contains just over 1,000 pages. It's more comprehensive than ever.

The 74 articles in this new edition are organized in nine sections: foundations; methods; assessment and evaluation; general instructional strategies; domain-specific strategies and models; design, planning, and implementation; emerging technologies; technology integration; and a look forward.

J. Michael Spector, M. David Merrill, Jan Elen, and M.J. Bishop are the editors of this edition. Spector and Merrill were among the editors of the previous *Handbook* as well, which speaks to continuity.

Readers of the fourth edition will find familiar topics brought up to date as well as new topics that address the ever-changing fields encompassed by the *Handbook*.

As was the case with prior editions, the newest *Handbook* will be accessible. As a member benefit, all editions of the *Handbook* are available electronically to AECT members through the association's website.

"If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow" —John Dewey

## Member Access Publications

### *Educational Technology Research and Development*

Bimonthly  
ISSN: 1042-1629 (print)  
ISSN: 1556-6501 (electronic)  
Journal no. 11423  
Springer US

### *TechTrends*

Bimonthly  
ISSN: 8756-3894 (print)  
ISSN: 1559-7075 (electronic)  
Journal no. 11528  
Springer US

### *Instructional Science*

An International Journal of the Learning Sciences  
Bimonthly  
ISSN: 0020-4277 (print)  
ISSN: 1573-1952 (electronic)  
Journal no. 11251  
Springer Netherlands

### *International Journal of Designs for Learning*

Quarterly  
ISSN: 2159-449X  
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## Research Roundup

## Learning Designers as Innovation Officers

“Chief innovation officers (CIOs) are slowly popping up in school districts around the country,” according to a recent article from the Center for Digital Education.<sup>1</sup> Innovation officers at the K-12 level are a new thing. They are a staple in other places, although the position may carry any number of titles.

In the mid-2000s, innovation officers emerged as a “new class of senior managers” whose “job was to help their organizations drive growth and transformation in a more systematic way.” Researcher Robert B. Tucker, writing for Innovation Excellence, comments,

In my own research, I find that today’s innovation managers are often newly appointed to the role, and the position newly created. They are often poorly trained, and surprisingly isolated from more experienced CIOs. Quite commonly, they have no network of other practitioners in other organizations to call upon when dealing with intractable challenges. Often, they are tasked with leading a multi-faceted, complex and evolving mission, for CEOs who are distant and uninvolved.<sup>2</sup>

Many, according to Tucker, are succeeding, although sometimes against steep odds.

The role descriptions of innovation officer and learning designer (instructional designer, learning architect, or other designation) are interestingly symmetrical. Tucker quotes a 2007 *Business Week* article that describes the role of a CIO as “a blend of marketer, technologist, strategist, and businessperson.” Substitute *educator* for *businessperson*, and that pretty closely sums up what many learning designers are called on to be—and to do.

AECT’s emphasis on leadership may stimulate some additional thoughts on how learning designers can be innovative leaders, regardless of whether they are pinned with the title “Chief Innovation Officer.” In addition to various resources available from AECT, aspiring CIOs can find a growing body of research and practice information. For example, those in

higher education may want to seek out the journal *Innovative Higher Education*, from the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) at <https://www.airweb.org>. It’s a refereed publication by the Institute of Higher Education that’s been around since 1975.

CIOs, like learning designers, work in many places besides schools and institutions of higher learning. And they are not just a U.S. phenomenon. This past spring Jisc, the United Kingdom charity for digital innovation within education and research, was looking for a “passionate technologist, strategist, and innovator” to become their new CIO. The CIO would “play a pivotal role” in “developing online content and delivering practical advice and guidance that aligns with the needs of UK further education, higher education and skills.”<sup>3</sup>

That sounds quite a lot like a learning designer.

The road to respect for CIOs, however, is likely to continue to be bumpy. Last year *Forbes* headlined, “Most Chief Innovation Officers Are Just Window Dressing.” The article reported on a global annual Innovative Leadership Study, based on a survey of “260 innovation executives around the world,” in which less than a third (30%) said they had “an effective organizational structure for innovation.”<sup>4</sup>

1. Tanya Roscoria. “Chief Innovation Officers Make Their Way Into Schools.” Center for Digital Education, July 22, 2013. <http://www.centerdigitaled.com>
2. Robert B. Tucker. “Are Chief Innovation Officers Delivering Results?” Innovation Excellence, March 22, 2013. <http://www.innovationexcellence.com>
3. “Jisc Recruits for New Chief Innovation Officer.” Jisc News, May 29, 2013. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk>
4. Frederick E. Allen. “Most Chief Innovation Officers Are Just Window Dressing.” *Forbes*, April 3, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com>